Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

Vol. XI.—No. 12. NEW YORK, N. Y., OCTOBER 19, 1895. Whole No. 324.

"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

I am glad to be able to announce that Comrade Lloyd's "Wind-Harp Songs" are in press, and will soon be published by Peter Paul & Co. of Buffalo. It will be duly advertised in these columns.

Having conquered the saloon-keepers, Roosevelt, the champion of law, has extended his crusade to the clubs, and has issued an order against Sunday liquor-selling to guests and members. A good many of his supporters will doubtless desert him now that he has encroached on the illegal privileges of the rich, but Roosevelt would rather fail than expose himself to the charge of inconsistency and discrimination. The law says that liquor shall not be sold by clubs on Sunday, and he will enforce that prohibition as far as possible. Nobody will rejoice at his decision more than will the saloon-keepers. If he fails with the clubs, they will have a powerful weapon against him. By the way, it is the opinion of legal lights that the law also forbids the giving away of liquor in private houses on Sunday; will Roosevelt also attempt to enforce *this* provision. If not, why not? If the law allows him to invade saloons without warrants on mere suspicion, why may he not invade private residences?

The South Carolina constitutional convention has adopted an article of the proposed constitution forbidding the State legislature to legalize divorce at any time or to recognize divorces granted in other States. South Carolina is now the only State in the union which does not permit the dissolution of marriage. The press of the State claims superior virtue, purity, and morality for the men and women of South Carolina, and thanks the Lord that the loose practices and vicious notions of other States are not demoralizing those pure-minded natives. Why public sentiment in South Carolina should be so overwhelmingly opposed to divorce is not easy to see. The talk about superior virtue is fudge, of course, but what is the real explanation? Perhaps the New York "Press" is right when it makes the following suggestion (as a general thing, it is easier for a rich man to enter heaven than for the "Press" to take a correct position, but strange things do happen, and one should always be ready to accept truth even from Nazareth): "The chronic and invariable profanation of the marriage tie by those men who had a mind to it was as much a part of the institution of slavery as was the auction block or the whipping post. We don't mean by black men, but by white. . . . Unless we are greatly mistaken, divorce was originally left out of South Carolina's list of legal remedies in order to retain in subjection the white wives who were daily and flagrantly insulted in their own homes by perfect proof of what we call statutory cause." The original condition no longer exists, but the sentiment may have survived and taken root.

When Roosevelt opened his anti-saloon crusade, he explicitly stated that he had no sympathy with the rigorous laws which it was his bounden duty to execute, and that personally he favored liberal Sunday legislation. The other day, in a speech to church people, he confessed that his feelings have changed greatly. He said: "So far from being sorry for enforcing the law, I am glad. Originally I was sympathetic and reluctant; but the exhibition of lawlessness, the determination of saloon-keepers to defy the law and keep us from doing our honest duties, has killed all such feelings." This reveals to us the nature of the man and his conception of individual rights. If he believed that the law was wrong, he might have anticipated vigorous opposition to its enforcement. A wrong law is never cheerfully obeyed, and even those who hypocritically talk about the duty of good citizens to respect all laws as long as they are in force do not, in their hearts, blame people for evading or violating obnoxious statutes. Besides, the question how the community, or a section of it, acts has nothing to do with the question of principle. Violence may be unwise, but, if the law provoking it be wrong, those who know it to be wrong cannot hold themselves excused from efforts to change it. Roosevelt's remark indicates that he is governed by personal motives rather than by principle. His lofty airs and pompous talk will not hide his smallness and inconsistency.

Professor Jenks, of Cornell university, has an excellent article in the "American Journal of Sociology" on the need of better guidance of public opinion in this country. He dwells on the cowardice of our public men and the supremacy of the uneducated and fickle mass. As public opinion makes and mars parties and issues, he shows that no progress can be expected as long as this public opinion is chaotic, ignorant, and erratic. He rightly thinks that a thoroughly independent and fearless newspaper, if started under proper auspices and freed from the necessity of humoring advertisers, would not only accomplish marvellous results in influencing public opinion, but would actually prove a most successful financial enterprise. Prof. Jenks has given expression to an idea which has been long and persistently entertained by some experienced journalists. Strange as it may seem, it is certain that an absolutely truthful and incorruptible newspaper would be welcomed by the very people who, at first blush, seem to revel in lies and vulgar sensationalism. No matter how prejudiced and blind a man may be, there is always some question or event with respect to which he is eager to know the actual truth, and nearly every man would find it impossible to ignore a paper that always told the truth and always rendered credit where it was due. Such a paper would gradually become a most powerful factor in shaping public opinion and in counteracting the lying partisan sheets. It would be most excellent propaganda by deed, and, unlike other forms of propaganda, would pay tremendously in the long run.

"God and the State," which has been out of print for some months, is now reprinted in its eighth edition, and orders for it can be filled. Another pamphlet—one of the most important in Anarchistic propaganda,—which has been missed greatly for the last year, Col. William B. Greene's "Mutual Banking," is to be republished shortly, through the enthusiasm and perseverance of Comrade Cohen, of Denver. There were no plates of this work; hence its protracted absence from the market. But Mr. Cohen has succeeded in interesting Mr. N. O. McClees, of Denver, recently the Populist secretary of State in Colorado under Governor Waite, and that gentleman is now a firm believer in mutualism in finance. Mr. McClees, in consequence, is reprinting the pamphlet, with a preface by Mr. Cohen, and it is expected that it will be ready by November 1. It will be sold at ten cents, instead of twenty-five,—a price at which it should receive a wide circulation. The movement is deeply indebted to Mr. Cohen for this important service, which is the more timely because rendered at a moment when efforts are in progress to burden Anarchism with unsound financial theories. It is a pity that Colonel Greene, whose voice remained unheeded for so many years, could not have lived to enjoy the awakening of interest in his work which the last decade has witnessed. Mr. Cohen has set a good example. Who will follow it? There remains much to be done. For instance, it is no longer possible to supply Lysander Spooner's admirable "Letter to Grover Cleveland." Of that work, happily, I have plates, but I cannot at present command the means of printing a new edition.

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Issued Fortnightly at Two Dollars a Year; Single Copies, Eight Cents.

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Office of Publication, 24 Gold Street.
Post Office Address: LIBERTY, P. O. Box No. 1312, New York, N. Y.

Entered at New York as Second-Class Mail Matter.

NEW YORK, N. Y., OCTOBER 19, 1895.

"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Experts or the People?

A curious controversy has arisen in regard to the question whether the people or the experts ought to settle the financial problem. One of the experts, Prof. J. B. Clark, after arguing abstrusely (and ineffectively) in favor of the gold standard, remarks that, after all, the people will decide what kind of currency we are to have. Another expert, Horace White, of the "Evening Post," objects to this enthronement of the people as the final authority, and thinks that the experts ought to decide the matter. He says:

> As for popular fitness to discuss or decide abstruse questions of coinage and credit, nothing has cost our country more dear, from Jackson's day down, than the idea that all a man needed to give a good currency to the people was great vigor, high animal spirits, and lungs and front of brass. The truth is the people themselves know better. They know themselves better than do the politicians. Go out into the streets and ask the first ten men you meet what they know about the currency, and nine of them, if they are honest, will tell you that they know nothing whatever. Ask them what kind of currency they are going to vote for, and all they can say is a "good" one. Who shall decide what the good currency is, they cannot say; they only know that they cannot decide it. They are anxious to be told, no doubt, when the question is in political issue, and the work of educating them on the currency is, of course, indispensable; but the men who must tell them, who must educate them, are men who know. "The people," going on their own knowledge, would get on as well deciding what kind of electric motors we shall have as what kind of currency. They do not want to do one more than the other, and are willing to leave both to the demonstrated experts.

Now, if it is true that the people realize their total incapacity to deal with the subject and are willing to leave it to the expert, how is it that the country has suffered so much, as the "Post" alleges, from popular tampering with the currency? As a matter of fact, there is no evidence of any popular faith in experts. And who are the demonstrated experts? Not, assuredly, the bankers and moneyed men. Their own ignorance of financial principles is as dense (and far more hopeless) than that of the people, and it is demonstrated ignorance. The people distrust no body of persons more than the bankers. They have not only found, with Ruskin, that "moneyed men, generally, are ignorant enough to believe and to assent to anything," but they also perceive, again with Ruskin, that the ignorance of the moneyed men "*always tells on their own side.*" There is every reason to believe that the "Post" means bankers and financiers when it says experts, but it is utterly mistaken in assuming that the people have any notion of allowing these "experts" to decide the currency problem.

But how about the theoretical "experts," the professors, "scholars in politics," and speculative economists? Alas! even the "Post" no longer loves or trusts these. Only a few weeks ago, in commenting on the fact that nearly all English economists and professors are adherents of bimetallism, it ridiculed the pretensions of professors and theorizers to practical familiarity with financial affairs, and virtually denied that they play any active part in public affairs. Indeed, it spoke of them in the same tone and spirit as those which characterized the attacks on the "free-trade theorists" made by McKinley protectionists in the campaign of 1890. The contempt for "mere professors" which the Republican organs then affected was not more withering than that which the "Post" now professes to feel toward bimetallists-of-the-chair. As for the people, they certainly evince little disposition to follow the guidance of those whose books and diagrams they do not even glance at.

Moreover, even should the people call the experts to rule over them, would there be any chance of any agreement, even on fundamental propositions? The discussion of bimetallism at the London Institute, lately adverted to in these columns, affords a significant illustration of the kind of "picnic" the experts would inaugurate. Any one conversant with economic literature knows how "unsettled" nearly every important question is deemed to be by the highest authorities.

How, then, are complex questions to be decided? Here is the answer of the Springfield "Republican":

> Experts may present theories, but the demonstrations of experience determine the issue in the case of motors, and so it will be with the money question. And only good sense and some knowledge of affairs are required to sit in judgment on the teachings of experience. This is lucky for us, because, if we were dependent upon the conclusions of a warring crowd of "experts" for a settlement of the question, we should be brought into a pretty mess.

This very naïvely assumes that "experience" somehow interprets and speaks for itself, which is, of course, highly absurd. Every theorizer and partisan interprets experience in his own way, and to extract the true lesson therefrom is one of the most difficult tasks. Even on such a simple question as whether the free-wool clause of the new tariff has or has not injured the American wool trade, we find a hopeless conflict of opinion, both popular and expert. In finance, each step in the "experience" becomes a fruitful source of wrangling and contention, and the method of induction becomes much more difficult of application and barren of results than the method of the "mere theorizers."

It is easy enough to prove by the testimony of history that neither experts or the people have, in the past, decided financial problems. Accident, self-interest of rulers, temporary needs, have often determined the course of financial development, while economic laws have spontaneously led to the gradual adoption of the whatever admirable elements are found in the present system of shreds and patches. It may be safely asserted that all the good ingredients are due to spontaneous development, and that all the impediments and defects are traceable to legislation dictated by interest or supposed necessity. Neither the people or the experts are responsible for the present national banking system: on the other hand, it is equally true that the clearing house, for instance, is not the product of any deliberate and slow acts of any body of experts. If there is any lesson in experience, it is to allow more room for the free operation of economic laws and necessities, and to restrict the opportunities of interference possessed by political experts or the mass of voters. Economic truth is not unknowable, but markets rather than theories, supply and demand rather than schools, ought to decide the questions of currency and exchange. It so happens that true economic science leads to the conclusion to which ignorance and despair will eventually lead the perplexed editors,—that in *laissez faire* lies the solution. V. Y.

Lombroso Repudiates Nordau.

No more complete and unqualified rejection of a disciple's gospel by his master can be imagined than is found in the case of Lombroso and Nordau. The latter, claiming to apply the former's scientific discoveries to the critical realm, startled and gratified Philistia and captured hundreds of fool editors and critics by his demonstration that the greatest men of the century are imbeciles and malignant degenerates. The master now calls his blatant disciple down, and chastises him in public for stupidity and reckless misrepresentation. In the current "Century," Lombroso, writing on the "Value and Errors" of "Degeneracy," calmly, but firmly, shows that each postulate and conclusion of the book is an ignorant perversion of that scientific knowledge which Nordau professed to apply. While he does not *say* so, Lombroso's argument clearly shows that he regards the Nordau book as entirely worthless and even pernicious. What wretched Nordau will do in view of this "unkindest cut of all" cannot be predicted, for a man of his brazenness and impudence is not nonplussed by exposure. But he has already written a characteristic letter *à propos* of the article, which indicates that he is going to pose as the disinterested student who is ready to sacrifice everything, even consistency and reputation, for truth. It seems that Lombroso, before finishing his article, wrote to Nordau that he would "differ" from him much on several points, and that he was reluctant to publish it. "Speak the word," he told Nordau, and the article "shall be burned." This is highly questionable conduct for such a moralist and *savant* as Lombroso, for, from his point of view, it was absolutely necessary that Nordau's misrepresentations of the Lombroso gospel should be disowned and corrected, both in the interest of science and humanity. How can any "sweet

relations" between two men be preferred to the triumph of truth and justice? Nordau, in answer, with his eyes lowered and his voice trembling with emotion, told his master to proceed and spare him not. "As the truth is my supreme guide, I would a thousand times prefer to be set right by you than to continue in error." Max characteristically added the following, to forestall adverse critics:

I know very well that all the idiots of the two hemispheres will plume themselves, after your article appears; while taking care not to specify the point which divides us, they will audaciously generalize, and cry: "Behold the disciple disowned by him whom he has proclaimed his master! Demolished is the foundation on which rested the whole edifice! Now nothing is left of it but a heap of shapeless rubbish." But what of that? Fair-minded men will nevertheless know how to take an equitable view of the bearing of your criticism and of your reservations.

Well, as I am not an idiot and am anxious to be "equitable" even to such a quack and impostor as Nordau, let me do justice justly, and see what Lombroso leaves intact of the foundation of "Degeneracy." He says some very complimentary things about Nordau and his book, but they are found to be glittering generalities. Nordau has felt the pulse of our times, has the "supreme merit" of applying, for the first time, "psychiatric research" to literary criticism, and has overthrown the work of those decadents who would proclaim science bankrupt because she has not solved all the mysteries and made everybody happy. All this is very fine, but how about Nordau's elaborate demonstration that Wagner, Ibsen, Tolstoi, Whitman, and the rest of his alleged "degenerates" are simply crazy wretches whose work is fatal to society? This, says Lombroso, is absurd. Nordau has completely misunderstood the relation of genius to insanity. These men *are* geniuses, and their work *is* great and highly salutary. They are not altogether sane, to be sure, but that is *because* they are geniuses. *All* geniuses are necessarily abnormal, and the greater the genius, the more pronounced are the abnormal traits. This fact, says Lombroso, must be recognized, and to quarrel with it is silly.

Lombroso charitably assumes that Nordau misinterpreted him; the more probable explanation is that he wilfully misrepresented the drift of Lombroso's theories. He saw an excellent opportunity for a sensation; the time was ripe for a reactionary assault on the most distinctive leaders of modern thought, and Lombroso's speculations afforded the basis for such a sweeping indictment. True, it was necessary to distort and reverse them, but the fools and Philistines on whom Nordau counted could not be expected to detect the trick. And they did not detect it. Nordau doubtless hoped that Lombroso would preserve silence and do nothing to disturb their "sweet relations."

Lombroso, after a general denial of Nordau's conclusions, proceeds to vindicate Wagner and Tolstoi in a specific manner. He pooh-poohs every substantial criticism of the work of these men made by Nordau. Wagner is a great musician. Tolstoi is a great psychological novelist. These are facts. The blemishes pointed out by Nordau in their creations are mere trifles, dust in the balance. And so on.

Furthermore, Lombroso utterly rejects Nordau's "remedies." What Nordau denounces as dangerous currents are merely ripples on the surface, while that which he offers in the name of sanity and progress is "clerical morals," the puritanical notions of Savonarola and Cromwell.

Poor Max! After specifying all the points which "divide" him and Lombroso, it is impossible for any reader who is *not* an idiot to refrain from saying: "Behold the disciple disowned by him whom he has proclaimed his master! Demolished is the foundation on which rested the whole edifice! Now nothing is left of it but a heap of shapeless rubbish." How well, though, Nordau has described the situation in these words!

Pitiful as is Nordau's predicament, he can console himself by reflecting upon the predicament of the critics and reviewers (and their name is legion) who have accepted his philosophy and endorsed his verdict upon the "degenerates." How these poor devils feel can be better imagined than described. If there is any sense of shame in them, I fear there will be an appalling increase in the suicide rate.

V. Y.

Land Tenure Again.

To the Editor of Liberty:

I begin to have hopes that the end of our discussion over land tenure is in sight; for I find that all but three of the points raised in No. 308 can safely be left where you and I leave them in that number.

In point 4, my claim is that the coercion of the non-invasive individual can never be for the good of society. It may be necessary, in order to have the minimum of invasion, to coerce invaders. It may in certain cases be impossible to do this without hitting non-invaders at the same time. In such a case the minimum of invasion may practically involve the coercion of non-invaders. But I do not believe that the minimum of invasion can ever involve or allow the coercion of non-invaders, except where it is an unavoidable incident in the coercion of invaders. And I believe that the minimum of invasion is always, without exception, socially desirable.

You, as I understand, are taking the position that coercion of the non-invasive individual is sometimes not only desirable, but necessary, for the good of society, even when it is not in any aspect a measure against invasion. I believe the plumb-line can be made to hang straighter.

The unwilling conscripts in the hostile army you describe on p. 3 of No. 307 either fight or don't fight. If they fight against me, they are invading me, and the fact that they are at the same time being invaded by others does not make them any the less invaders of me; I resist them as such. If they don't fight, but are mixed with those who do, I aim my cannon at those who do, and, if I hit those who don't, it is by accident. An overwhelmingly probable accident, to be sure; nevertheless, I am shooting at invaders, not at non-invaders. And my action cannot properly be made parallel to that of one who shoots at non-invaders because of a supposed necessity to prevent Chinese immigration. One case is the resistance of invasion, to the injury of non-invaders. The other is injury to non-invaders without the resistance of invasion.

Point 5. Then houses will be rented under your system just as now, and the sum charged for rent will include the rental value of the land as well as payment for the use of the house. And the same will be true of improved farms; for, according to the best statistics I know, the value of city real estate is only about two-fifths in the improvements, while that of farms is more improvements than land—in the eastern States, at least. In the west it is different, according to a recent statement by the editor of the "Single-Tax Courier"; but I suppose even there the value of cultivation, fencing, buildings, orchards, etc., on a moderately good farm must be enough to hold the title even when the farm is not personally occupied by the owner of these improvements. He can then rent his improvements to another man, and no power can keep him from including the rental value of the land in the price he charges. Neither can he be kept from putting into the lease a provision that all improvements made by the tenant shall become the landlord's property, so that the title to the land will remain his.

Perhaps you will say that you always had these things in mind, and I need not have stated them. But I am sure that many have expected the occupancy-and-use system to make some radical change in the relations of landlord and tenant. This cannot be, if the owner of improved land is free to rent his improvements, and with them to rent the land inseparable from them, and can yet hold such a title to the improvements as will enable him to turn his tenant off them—and off the land—at the expiration of the lease. For the relation of landlord and tenant will remain the same as now on improved land, and it very seldom exists on any other. Ground-leases for building purposes, in which the tenant retains ownership of the building he erects, will be superseded by contracts in which the tenant will appear as the landlord's agent in the business of erecting such buildings; aside from that, I do not see what change will be made.

Only the rate of rent will be somewhat lowered by two slight changes. There will be opened for settlement all such land as does not bear improvements enough to hold it, and has not value enough to be worth putting on improvements for the mere sake of holding it; and valuable land now quite idle will be improved and used by its owners so far as may be needful to keep the title to the land,—no farther, probably, since they now prefer to hold it altogether idle. Great gifts to the landless, truly! How much do you expect rents to be reduced by competition from these two new supplies of land?

The amount of leased real estate in the country is great now, and rapidly increasing. I do not see what feature of your plan will hinder its continued increase. And you propose to let the rent of all this land continue passing into the landlords' pockets. Since landlords never earned their rent, some one must be scanted of his earnings to pay it. Then, if there is robbery wherever the laborer's wages will not buy back his product, this taking of rent is robbery.

And you call me a robber because I propose to take this same rent to be used, as far as I can see it so used, to satisfy those who produced it. I cannot see how my action in putting it into a central treasury is more governmental than yours in giving it to the landlords. I cannot see that the State is likely to use it more oppressively than the landlords; these, as the beneficiaries of a highly profitable monopoly, will, according to all experience, use their wealth to protect and extend their monopoly by fair means or foul. And if you claim that some rent—less than half, though—will under your system be left in the pockets of producers to whom it honestly belongs, I can answer that the total amount of rent under your policy will be much greater than under mine; for the Single Tax, by forcing unused or half-used land into full use, will do all that can be done to reduce ground rent.

Now, as to your drug-stores. The druggist who owns his store, but does not own the land it stands on, will become practical owner of the land also under your system. How many such druggists do you suppose there are down town in New York? Hardly one, I should suppose, except possibly a wholesaler or two. The druggist who owns his store and the land it is on will not have his position essentially changed. Neither will the druggist whose store is in a building owned by another man. He must still pay rent to the owner of the building, just as now; how will he be enabled to sell lower? And his case is the case, I venture to say, of at least forty-nine in fifty of the down-town druggists.

But perhaps the hundredth man, who now owns his store, but not the land under it, and thus really would be relieved of his rent, is to do all the reducing of prices. But he will have no better chance than the man who owns both store and lot has now. Why does not he, the man who now pays no rent because he is on his own land, now undersell his rent-paying competitors? Why does not Macy's store, which, I believe, is on its own land, constantly undersell Stewart's, which pays a big rent to Sailor's Snug Harbor?

Point 9. Then, if the point of good faith is ruled out, and if, as I suppose, the antithesis of "legitimate purposes" and "malicious intent" in No. 304 is simply another way of putting the same thing, and is thus ruled out, am I to understand that the man who builds a cage over the sleeper is an invader or not? And, if he is, what is the difference that makes him an invader, while the man who blocks up a passage-way is not? In No. 309 good faith and legitimate intent were the grounds of distinction: now that they are to be ignored, I am not sure what distinction you will make.

What you say here about doubtful cases, with your answer to Mr. Phipson in the picket note of No. 306, reminds me of a question I asked two years ago, getting an answer that was not clear to me. If A claims to occupy a piece of land, and B, claiming that it is not occupied, begins to build a house or plant a field there, and if A then appeals to the courts, and the jury is not unanimous, who holds the land? The occupant is left in possession, of course; but which of the two is the occupant for this purpose?

As to what you want Single Taxers to acknowledge in the last picket note of No. 308, I, for one, accept all your propositions, and am ready to make such arrangement with you as I can for carrying them into effect. The only point of difficulty will be to decide just how large your share is; but we must do the best we can with a rough estimate, till we can find a way to measure it accurately.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

It will be rather difficult for the reader to pick up the thread of this discussion, which was dropped seven months ago. The long interruption must not be attributed to Mr. Byington. During this period so many other controversies have arisen that it seemed to me advisable to attend to them in preference to Mr. Byington, my debate with him having already consumed a great amount of space. I thank him for the patience with which he has awaited the appearance of the article printed above. As for the unfortunate reader, I can only advise him to neglect the controversy altogether, unless he has the patience to turn back to No. 308, and the issues closely preceding it, and there refresh his memory concerning the earlier stages of the argument.

Mr. Byington returns to the consideration of the points which in No. 308 were numbered 4, 5, and 9. Under the same heads I answer him.

Point 4. I deny that the thing fundamentally desirable is the minimum of invasion. The ultimate end of human endeavor is the minimum of pain. We aim to decrease invasion only because, as a rule, invasion increases the total of pain (meaning, of course, pain suffered by the ego, whether directly or through sympathy with others.) But it is precisely my contention that this rule, despite the immense importance which I place upon it, is not absolute; that, on the contrary, there are exceptional cases where invasion—that is, coercion of the non-invasive—lessens the aggregate pain. Therefore coercion of the non-invasive, when justifiable at all, is to be justified on the ground that it secures, not a minimum of invasion, but a minimum of pain. The position, then, which Mr. Byington seems to take that coercion of the non-invasive is allowable only as an unavoidable incident in the coercion of invaders, and not allowable when it is an unavoidable incident in the prevention of impending cataclysmic disaster not the work of invaders, is seen at once to be inconsistent with my fundamental postulate—to me axiomatic—that the ultimate end is the minimum of pain. If Mr. Byington believes that the minimum of invasion is always desirable, I summon him to deal specifically with the case cited by me in my discussion with Mr. Yarros in No. 310,—the case, that is, of a burning city which can be saved from total destruction only by blowing up the houses on a strip of territory inhabited by non-invasive persons who refuse their consent to such disposition of their property. If Mr. Byington thinks that these houses should not be blown up, I ask him to tell us why. If, on the other hand, he admits that they should be blown up, I ask him if such action would not be "injury to non-invaders without the resistance of invasion,"—a policy to which he declares himself opposed under any circumstances. Can he maintain his abstract proposition in face of the concrete illustration? Moreover, the illustration, though not framed originally for this discussion, is a most happy one for the purpose, since here it is the innocent act of land-occupancy which constitutes the obstacle to social welfare. I hold, then, to my claim that occupancy and use as the title to land is not vitiated by the fact that it is a rule which, like all others, must sometimes be trodden underfoot.

Point 5. Either Mr. Byington has not understood me, or I do not understand him. His answer to me, under this head, seems to be based on an assumption that my previous answer to him was just the opposite of what it really was. He had put to me this question: "If A builds a house, and rents it to B, who thereupon lives or works in it under the lease, will you regard A or B as the 'occupier and user' of the land on which that house stands?" I answered: "I would regard B as the occupant and user of the land on which the house stands, and as the owner of the house itself." To this Mr. Byington rejoins: "Then houses will be rented under your system just as now, and the sum charged for rent will include the rental value of the land as well as payment for the use of the house." A most remarkable conclusion, surely! To my own mind the logical conclusion is precisely the contrary. It is perfectly clear to me that A will not build a house to rent to B, if he knows that the protective association will recognize B as the owner of both land and house as soon as he becomes the occupant. How Mr. Byington can think that he will passes my comprehension. All that he goes on to say, under this head, being based on what seems to me a misunderstanding of my answer, I cannot deal with it until the mystery is cleared up. But I utterly repudiate the idea that unused land, if usable, would remain idle under an occupancy-and-use *régime*. How could it, when any one would be free to take it and would not be forced to pay rent for it?

As a result of the misunderstanding, Mr. Byington has failed to "see about the drug-stores." All his present remarks upon them are *mal à propos*. Under an occupancy-and-use system all ground-floor druggists—that is, all retail druggists—will be owners of both land and store, and competition will proceed among them with the effect described by me in No. 304, and my argument that "competition under freedom shows a strong tendency to take from the occupants of superior sites their advantage" remains intact. Mr. Byington will have to try again. First, however, let me answer his puerile question: "Why does not the man who now pays no rent because he is on his own land now undersell his rent-paying competitors." For precisely the same reason that the man who pays no interest because he is using his own capital does not undersell his interest-paying competitors. Is Mr. Byington really unaware that the man who uses that which he could lend to another for a price insists on getting as much profit from it (in addition to the reward of his labor and enterprise) as he would get if he should lend it?

Point 9. Mr. Byington may understand that the man who builds a cage over the sleeper is an invader. The man who blocks up an improved, claimed, and constantly used highway is also an invader. The man who takes possession of an unoccupied, unimproved, unused passage is not an invader, and does not become one simply because, afterward, somebody else wishes to make a highway of it. Such a man is not to be dispossessed except in one of those rare emergencies when necessity, which knows no law, compels it.

Regarding protection of occupancy, I answer Mr. Byington that undoubtedly the protective association would insist on registration of all titles to real estate as a condition of protection. Then, in case of dispute between claimants and a failure of the jury to agree, the protective association would regard as the occupant the party whose registration of title it had already accepted.

The picket note to which Mr. Byington alludes in his last paragraph was a criticism upon Miss Katharine J. Musson, an answer to which from her own pen appears in another column. The paragraph being short, I reproduce it, with a view to the reader's convenience:

> The statement that a State can have no rights except those delegated to it by individuals is singular doctrine on the lips of a Single Taxer. Miss Musson acknowledges the right of the State to collect rent from every land-occupant, this rent being in her eyes the just due of all individuals, since all have an equal right to the use of every part of the earth. It follows from these two positions that the State, if it collects my share of this rent, commits an act of usurpation, for I have not delegated to it the right to collect my rent. And yet I have not heard that Miss Musson or any other Single Taxer would limit the State, in the exercise of its rent-collecting function, to the collection of only such portion of the total rent as is properly due to the persons who have appointed the State their rent-collector. It follows further that all individuals who, like myself, have not appointed the State their rent-collector may, if they choose, go about, each individually, from one land-occupant to another, collecting their respective shares of the rent due. According to this, I have the right to at once start out on a tour among my neighbors (or even among all the land-occupying inhabitants of the earth) and demand of each the delivery into my hands of that greater or smaller fraction of a cent which each owes me for the current quarter. Or, if I find this course too expensive, all those who ignore the State may unite in appointing a private force of rent-collectors to collect their share of the total rent. Does Miss Musson accept these logical inferences from her position?

It will be observed that Mr. Byington and Miss Musson, both Single Taxers and both individualists, take precisely opposite grounds in answer to my criticism.

Mr. Byington admits that the State is a usurper if it collects my share of rent without

getting from me a power of attorney. He claims neither for himself or for any other person or for any association of persons the right to collect my share of rent without authorization from me. Accordingly he expresses a willingness to enter into an arrangement with me for the collection of our rents; that is, he invites me to give a power of attorney. I must admit that this is very accommodating on Mr. Byington's part; nevertheless, I churlishly decline. If any part of the money in the hands of land-users belongs to me (which is the hypothesis just now), I prefer to leave it where it is. Now, Mr. Byington, what are you and your Single-Tax friends going to do about it? I do not call upon you to determine *my* share; so far as I am concerned, it may remain undetermined. But, if you are going to collect *your* share, you will have to determine first what *your* share is. At any rate, I bid you take good care not to touch mine. By your own confession you Single Taxers are entitled to collect only such rent as is the rightful share of the Single Taxers, all others refusing to delegate their rights. Do you tell me that such a task is insuperably difficult and intrinsically absurd? Very well, I answer; that fact is not my fault; it is simply the misfortune of the Single-Tax theory.

The collection of rent by each individual from all land-users on earth, which Mr. Byington accepts so complacently, is an absurdity which Miss Musson cannot stand. So she attempts to dispute my conclusion. But first, ardent propagandist that she is, she improves the opportunity to air the Single-Tax theory. All right; I do not begrudge her the space. But I am not debating with her now regarding the Single-Tax theory. For the nonce I am accepting it; I am supposing that I have a right in certain funds now in the hands of land-users. So never mind the Single-Tax theory. Then she tells me of the dreadful things that would happen if, under an occupancy-and-use *régime*, I should refuse to delegate my right. But I am not discussing occupancy and use either. Miss Musson is supposed to know nothing of my opinions on the land question. I present myself to her simply as the individual, Tucker, who declines to delegate his rights, just as I might have presented a hypothetical individual, Smith. But, argues Miss Musson, you have no separate right to rent. Very well; we will not dispute about that either. The only thing that concerns me at present is Miss Musson's specific declaration, in the last sentence of her article, that I have a share in the aggregate right to rent, and that *I can delegate this to the State*. Here I have all that I want,—all that is necessary to the main purpose of my original criticism. Delegation of rights is an act of pure volition, and, as such, implies the power to refuse such delegation. Then, if I can delegate to the State my share in the aggregate right to rent, I can also decline to delegate it. Now, I do so decline. But Miss Musson has previously and fundamentally declared that a State can have no rights except those delegated to it by individuals. Therefore, since I refuse to delegate to the State my share in the aggregate right to rent, the State has no right to take my share in the aggregate right to rent. Q. E. D. And there is no escape from the demonstration. Miss Musson may as well "acknowledge the corn" first as last, and make her choice between individualism and the Single Tax. The two are incompatible. T.

The "Voice," the prohibition organ, is trying to be very smart, with the result that it is becoming vulgar, unscrupulous, and silly. Instance its treatment of the parade of the New York German "liberal Sunday" societies. Everybody, including the leader of the law-enforcement crusade, Roosevelt, spoke of it with respect, and even Parkhurst declared frankly that on the question of Sunday saloons there is room for honest differences of opinion. He has been in Germany and England, and knows that Sunday beer does not mean disorder and indecency, as the shrieking fanatics claim. The "Voice," however, devoted a column of cheap ridicule to the demonstration, and attempted to make campaign capital out of the *names* of the leaders. As the demonstration was known to be exclusively a German affair, what wonder is it that the names of the marshals were Sulzer, Krauss, Schoen, Schmitt, Grell, and so on? Yet the "Voice," pretending to find in the names indication of the low origin and character of their bearers, sneered in this strain: "What a list for Liberty to select as her officials! It is enough to make our revolutionary forefathers, who fell fighting the Hessians, turn in their graves and moan." Such demagogic know-nothingism is unworthy of any decent man. Are the Germans inferior to a nation of Smiths and Joneses and Thomsons and Perkinses? Have not the Germans *their* revolutionary heroes, thinkers, *savants*, and reformers? Even the "Voice" has never sneered at the German emperor on the ground that his name was Hohenzollern, or at Social Democrats because their leaders are Bebel, Liebknecht, and Volmar! The trick is despicable, and is designed to fan prejudice and national hatred.

The survivors of the "blue" and of the "gray" met and fraternized at Chickamauga, and, as long as the speech-making was jingoistic, or perfunctory, or banal, or hypocritical, everything was lovely and harmonious. But, when Governor Altgeld strayed from the beaten path of sham patriotism and ventured to touch upon the labor problem of today, or when Governor Tourney took occasion to tell the northern patriots that the south still believed that its cause was righteous, and submitted to the outcome of war for practical reasons without acquiescing in the anti-secession theories of the north, a change came over the spirit of the dream and all was coolness and embarrassment and suspicion. How sickening all this talk about a new nation and a new south and a new era becomes in the light of this impudence and intolerance of the northern "conquerors," who resent any attempt of a southerner to reaffirm his belief in the principles which led the south to resist the national government! Do these patriots really expect the south to thank them for the crushing defeat inflicted upon it by superior brute force?

The jingo press is shouting for the recognition of the belligerency of the Cuban insurrectionists by the United States. Cleveland and Olney are apparently hardened to the reckless abuse of the irresponsible scribes, and their contemptuous indifference makes the newspaper diplomats perfectly wild. The overwhelming majority of Americans are too practical and commercial to waste time or thought on political struggles in other countries; "there's no money in it for them" either way, and hence there is no reason for their bothering themselves about the matter. The intelligent few, on the other hand, feel no great interest in the insurrection because they have no faith in political changes and cannot get enthused over mere catchwords and empty forms. They know that industrial and social progress will not be greatly promoted by "independence," and that robbery by representatives of "free Cuba" is no improvement on robbery by officials of monarchical Spain. The day of purely political revolutions is past. There is no charm in the word republic, and, provided men have more real freedom and better economic opportunities, they do not mind living under a monarchy. The struggles which meet with sympathy in our days are struggles for real freedom. Monarchies will "go" incidentally, but so will republics.

A communication from a comrade contains the following passage: "I seldom write to anybody (with brains enough for a bishop) without asking him to subscribe for and read Liberty, and always mark mine in telling places and send to good soil." This friend's efforts have been fruitful. Had every subscriber to Liberty pursued the same course with the same persistency, the publication of the paper, instead of the expensive business that it is, would be a prosperous one.

Assocracy or Knavocracy?

Would that I could tell whether I am living under an assocracy or a knavocracy! In sooth, it seems to be both. When I consider that the great Democratic party did not know that which Liberty has been teaching for years,—namely, that a protectionist country could not safely approach free trade save through free banking,—when I consider this and a host of other equally potent facts, the assocrats seem to have it. But, if our rulers have asses' ears, the winds also murmur very distinctly that they aspire to the Midas-gift of turning all they touch to gold. Barras in his Memoirs relates that, when, by infinite patriotic protestations, Talleyrand secured from the directorate the head of the department of foreign affairs, as he crossed Paris in a carriage with two boon companions, on his way to accept office, he repeated over and over again, as he joyously slapped the knees of his friends, this sublime sentiment: "We are in possession of the stronghold; we must make an immense fortune in it, an immense fortune, an immense fortune, a fortune immense." I can think of no more appropriate inscription than this for our public buildings at Washington.

Paul Prince.

Biology versus Lloyd.

To the Editor of Liberty:

You may or may not be aware that the Anarchistic contention that the denial of duty to others involves a denial of duty to self is certified to as logical by the facts of biological science. That fragment of the physical world—that is to say, the body—which is the concomitant of the series of mental phenomena constituting the ego, and which we call the corporeal self, is plainly a part of the non-ego, and is other and objective in relation to the ego. Perhaps you were guided by inspiration, but the data are to be found in Huxley's "Address on Sensation and the Unity of Structure of Sensiferous Organs."

Geo. E. Macdonald.

Aggregate Rights to Land.

Mr. Tucker quotes the statement that an individual cannot delegate to a State a right which he does not possess, contending that this is not in harmony with the single-tax idea, that the State has the right to collect the rent, which right the individual, as an individual, does not possess. "If it collects my (Mr. Tucker's) share of this rent, it commits an act of usurpation, for I have not delegated to it the right to collect my rent. . . . All individuals who, like myself, have not appointed the State their rent-collector may, if they choose, go about, each individually, from one land-occupant to another collecting their respective shares of the rent due."

To fully answer this criticism, certain single-tax propositions must be made clear.

The fundamental principle of the single tax is: in things made by labor, ownership by the makers; in things not so made, equal right to all. Because land is not made by labor, no one can have a superior claim, and terms of possession should be equitable to all.

As soon as a community forms, certain advantages arise pertaining to particular localities, which are not found outside of the rent line. These advantages come about, not by the *measurable* exertion of particular individuals, but through their aggregation, and, therefore, belong to the community. If one individual has a right to that which he produces, one million individuals have a just claim to that which they produce. Therefore, whoever has possession of the site of these advantages is equitably bound to render an equivalent to the givers of the benefit.

The single tax does not "acknowledge the right of the State to collect rent from every land-occupant," but from such land-occupants only as would monopolize the advantages which communities give to particular portions of the earth. No matter how fertile the land a man may occupy, the State will not demand rent until a second comer desires to occupy the same plot of land.

It is contended that under the single tax the value of the various sites will be an exact reflection of communal advantages. If the user of a site pays fifty, it means that he has received an advantage of fifty above that which can be had outside of the communal line. Being simply an exchange of value for value received, the objection that the taking of economic rent is an unjust exaction is seen to be fallacious. No one is at a disadvantage.

Criminals cause a diminution of land values, while desirable citizens increase them. As in a composite picture, the mingling of handsome and homely features has a resulting influence on the photograph, but it would be an impossible task to determine exactly what each individual contributed to that picture.

Therefore I cannot see, supposing him to be a single taxer, on what Mr. Tucker bases a right to claim a percentage or per capita division of something of which he cannot tell his share in the making. He, alone, cannot make land values, nor can he estimate his personal influence in their creation, growth, or decline. As long as he remains within the rent line, he is constantly and unavoidably receiving and using communal advantages. He is in daily receipt of a value whose equivalent he wishes to put in his own pocket. He wants both the cake and the penny. In any of these cases there is a failure of justice.

The only alternative is to collect the whole rental value and then return it to the community in maintenance of equal freedom, by making and maintaining public highways and by protection of life and property. Each individual may use these advantages in any way conformable with the law of equal freedom.

If Mr. Tucker should refuse to pay an equivalent for the communal advantages accruing to the land which he is *using*, then he commits an aggression on that community,—an aggression on the just claim of the community to have what it produces.

He who does not wish to pay for these advantages should cease to make use of them. Outside of the rent line will be innumerable sites, which can be had for the using, even more fertile than many within the line. Under the single tax a large percentage of farms will pay no land rent, because they have no communal value. These farms will come the nearest to what I suppose Mr. Tucker means by the not yet definable "occupancy and use," requiring, however, a committee of that section—another name for administrative government—to hold the users in possession, and to settle differences as to boundary lines.

As I understand Mr. Tucker's "occupancy-and-use" theory, he must have a committee appointed to settle various questions as to use, etc., of land. Who appoints this committee? Will not the various members of Mr. Tucker's community, including himself, indicate their preference by voting for divers applicants for position on that committee? And the majority will win. Or, if there are several parties having different views as to "occupancy and use," they will vote, I think, according to proportional representation. A committee without power to act would, under these circumstances, be an absurdity. And lo! you have a government,—a government by majority at that.

If Mr. Tucker then believed in "occupancy and use," and voted for the election of a certain land committee, it would be an acknowledgment on his part that he can and did delegate his part of the "aggregate right" to that committee; to settle questions arising as to land, which manifestly, as an individual, he could not have the power to settle. He might even vote for himself, and that would be proof that he wished to delegate to himself his part of the aggregate right. If he refused to vote, because he did not wish to delegate his part of the aggregate right, then his special land committee would be the loser. In any of these three, and only possible, cases, the majority rules,—whether in the case of the single tax or that of occupancy and use,—to define its use and limit aggression of contending landowners.

I have tried to show that no one can prove a title to a per capita or estimated division of the rent. They are only entitled to the aggregate rent. They cannot prove separate rights to the rent, only aggregated rights; which aggregated rights, or each individual's part in these aggregated rights, he can delegate to the State.

KATHARINE J. MUSSON.

An Unexpected Sign of Sanity.

Since the collapse of the Ireland Building in this city, there has been a renewal of the cry for licensed architects. Nevertheless the grand jury, in its presentment on the case, squarely declares that the accident would not have happened, had the government officials done their duty in the premises. And in this connection it is pleasant to be able to reprint the following wholly admirable and Anarchistic leading editorial from so prominent an architectural periodical as the "Brickbuilder":

From the mass of details that the daily newspapers have given us, in connection with the fall of the Ireland Building in New York, one truth stands out conspicuous,—the inefficacy of law to procure safe buildings.

Not the least interesting fact in our present half-baked age, to the members of a future and higher civilization, looking back upon the development of the intellect at the close of the nineteenth century, will be our fond trust in legal enactments to obtain our desires, regardless of the physical and logical possibilities of the case.

Philosophers have preached, with the applause of the galleries, but with the comprehension of only a few in the audience, the function and scope of government, pointing out that the greatest possible liberty of action for the individual was the condition of social progress and ultimate perfection, and that the only possible function of government consistent with further development of mankind was to maintain this condition of greatest possible liberty for all.

Quite recently the New York "World" devoted a whole issue to the defence of liberty, quoting Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Buckle, and the rest of the thinkers upon that topic, to support its demands, and very proper demands, for the removal of legal restrictions upon the liquor traffic, but without indication of any comprehension that the same principle applied to all departments of human activity.

Now, if this office of defence against aggression be admitted as the only office of government, the only case where governmental agencies could properly interfere with buildings at all would be where somebody had erected a building with the intention of causing it to fall upon others, or had deliberately destroyed a building in order to injure the inhabitants. Even manifest insecurity is not aggressive, as long as others are not compelled to risk their lives in or near the dangerous building, and damage to the property of others, in case of a fall, is made good.

These conditions, however, do not occur. People do not build with any desire that their buildings shall fall, nor, except in war, which is a temporary relapse into savage conditions, do they destroy buildings maliciously. Everybody who builds is extremely anxious that his building shall be entirely secure, because it is very much to his interest that it shall be so.

As it is logically impossible for a liberty-defending government to restrict or revenge any but malicious damage done by builders, it is also physically impossible for a paternal government like ours to force its members into attending to their own interests better than they could attend to them unrestricted.

For consider what this matter of governmental supervision means.

It means that each architect shall have an angel guardian in brass buttons at his elbow to tell him just how to make every detail of his design. The present number of inspectors is totally inadequate to do this.

Architects will average at least two or three jobs at the same time. Work upon these, while they are in progress, goes on continually. General drawings, which now have to pass the building department, are followed by larger drawings of all parts in detail; framing plans, flue drawings, sidewalk vault drawings (which, by the way, are outside of the scope of the building department now, yet are, perhaps, more strongly built than any other part of the building), steam-boiler arrangements, drawings for elevators, schemes for high-pressure electric work, and so on,—a mountain of expert detail which cannot be minutely criticised by any one man, over which one man can exercise only general control, which must be handled by a system of hierarchical subordination and responsibility.

Then, when it comes to the supervision of the work in execution, it is equally impossible for an architect to know what goes on in particulars. If an architect has specified a proper thickness of concrete, for an instance, he has given his instructions, given them, moreover, in writing, and, if the failure to comply with these instructions escapes his attention, the responsibility for results is upon him whose business it was to carry out the instructions. An architect is a guide and counsellor, not a detective. Although it is his business to see that his design is properly carried out, he is not properly responsible for the failure of others to do as he tells them, and to do it in a good, sufficient, and workman-like way.

Although this sounds like heresy to those who flatter themselves that they can get a very cheap contractor, and that it is the business of the architect to make him do good work, it is backed by that most potent of arguments,—common sense. Everybody knows that it is impossible for an architect to spend all his time on a job; that visits, more or less frequent, are all that can be reasonably demanded. How is he to be responsible, if his instructions, given during his visit, are disregarded the moment he has departed? Even if, as is often done on large buildings, he keeps a superintendent on the building all the time, how is the superintendent to be in all places at once? While he is hammering iron columns to detect flaws at one side of the building, a mason's gang at the other side may be bedding foundation stones with only a rim of mortar; while he is watching the completion of the roof, the cellar concrete may be going down half the thickness specified.

When we talk of governmental inspection securing perfection in details, we might as well remember that it would require not only an inspector apiece for each architect, but an inspector of each gang of workmen on every building in progress.

Better, while we are about it, abolish architects entirely, and let the whole building business become a governmental bureau.

But reason is useless against that which is not founded upon reason. The superstitious confidence

in law, which we still retain as part of our nature, is but a survival of the ancient spirit of subordination to monarchical control which will not breed out for some generations to come; we venture this expostulation to aid the process of breeding out, not in any hope of working perceptible change in the course of events.

Yet there may come a revulsion sooner than might be expected. People are beginning to object to the rapidly growing number of office-holders which is needed to carry out their continual demand for more laws and more complete enforcement of laws. They will gradually come to understand that laws cannot be carried out without office-holders to carry them out; that each revision and intensification of law requires the appointment of still more office-holders, reveals further defects, to remedy which there must be more laws, to carry out which there must be more office holders, ending in a wholly Russian state of governmental control, and a total loss of inventiveness, initiative, and sense of responsibility in the people.

They will come to understand that, without the false confidence begotten of supposed governmental control, owners would not dare to employ incompetent architects, nor would architects dare to permit any but trustworthy contractors to be employed; that, if we give to all, architects, owners, and contractors, full scope for their ingenuity in finding the best and cheapest ways of doing things and hold them responsible only for damage that may result,—the contractor responsible for properly carrying out the instructions of the architect, the architect for giving proper designs and instructions, the owner for employing competent agents, whether architects or contractors,—we shall at one blow secure safer buildings, and check the growth of the office-holding class which already threatens our political institutions.

Shaw's Flaying of Nordau.

The elaborate criticism of Nordau's "Degeneration" by G. Bernard Shaw with which Liberty was so fortunate as to be favored has had in the United States what the French call "a good press." Readers would doubtless be interested in the editorial opinions upon it. Below I give in full one of the most warmly appreciative, from the Kansas City "Journal":

Sometimes the world is treated to a bit of refreshing criticism that comes like a dash of ice water,—first taking the breath and then giving a new idea of life. Such a criticism is that of G. Bernard Shaw, who, in a recent number of Liberty, punctured the brutal assumptions and pretensions which Max Nordau so vulgarly put forth in his "Degeneration."

The average man is prone to accept any assumption that carries with it the weight of "authority," and it was owing to this tendency of humanity that the book met with such ready acceptance. To the credit of the race, however, it must be said that a few men were strong enough to read a few pages, tire of it, and say so. Those who worried through what Shaw calls "two hundred and sixty thousand mortal words, saying the same thing over and over again," must either confess themselves very tired or very silly.

But it is not with Nordau nor his "Degeneration" that we now have to deal. Shaw has handled him in such a manner that he requires no further attention. His criticism is masterly in all things but one—he lays himself open to one of his objections to the book—he is too prolix. But he recognizes this, and claims a valid excuse in that he says he is writing for a people who are so wedded to their idols that it takes many words to get them away from them. Otherwise, he says, the book could be criticised in three lines.

Probably never before has there appeared such a wonderful defence of modern art and music as Mr. Shaw has given us in his criticism. With a keenness of perception that amounts almost to intuition he distinguishes the difference between true beauty of thought and the coarse pretence of the ignorant imitator, and shows at once that he perceives those subtle distinctions hidden to the blunter sensibilities of the German journalist.

Nordau is a brutal critic who glories in his brutality, and Shaw exposes his vulgar pretences with a satire too keen for the dull perception of one whose stock in trade is merciless attack upon what he fails to comprehend,—sensitiveness. When Shaw sums up all of Nordau's postulates in one sentence, that he (Nordau) had sense enough to know that a reactionary book would meet with a ready sale, he expresses such a volume of condemnation that it seems a pity he has felt compelled to occupy several pages of an estimable periodical in a scathing *exposé* of vulgarity and brutality.

Those who know the difference between sentiment and sentimentality; between the dull glare of an opal and the iridescent fire-play of the same stone; between the sombre gray tones of rock and heather on mountain side and the delicate color distinctions seen by the more sensitive eye; between the flaunting imagery of mercenary daubers and the subtle impression work of artists who have souls; between the coarse space writer who says things because they make his wares "sell" and the thinker who writes the impressions that seem almost God-given in their inspiration,—all these will feel a tinge of sorrow because Shaw felt it necessary to devote so much space to a vulgar pretender whose unworthiness should have been its own condemnation.

Yet the world is better off because of Nordau's "Degeneration," for it has given to us Shaw's criticism and defence of art. It has brought out one of the most masterly pieces of sarcasm that has reached the reading world in a generation, and in that, if in nothing more, it has aided in the elevation of human thought.

A Case of Conscience.

[Alexandre Hepp in Le Journal.]

With a cigar in my mouth I was strolling whither chance might lead me, up a steep street in the *faubourg*, swarming with people.

On every side the workshops were disgorging; blouses and caps made blue the dominant color of the scene; masons covered with plaster tumbled over each other in their rush to the fried-potato establishments, whose odor whetted their appetite; bareheaded working-women were standing at the entrance of the little restaurant where yellow salads, starred with beets, were spread temptingly on the counter.

It was the living hour of noon, the hour when I love to be near the people pouring out in their power upon the streets and sidewalks, with childish smiles and plays, in their brief respite from toil.

Swift, exquisite moment, during which the fiercest strugglers seem again to become good and gentle men, and which witnesses the reflowering in the regained sunlight, by miracle as it were, of something beautiful.

But suddenly, when I was half way up the hill, I received a tremendous push, and heard a roar similar to that of the ocean.

What had happened? Some brawl perhaps had arisen, after drinking, in consequence of some discussion or rivalry. And I looked straight before me, thinking to see already the swaying body, borne by neck and feet into the nearest druggist's, through the crowded doorway.

Nothing,—nothing but a compact and still mysterious gathering; then, beyond, a billow of bare heads.

Yet they were running, arms were waving in the air, windows suddenly opened, people rushed from the shops; in a minute the street had become formidable; the crowd rolled along without knowing where or why, in the expectation, the attraction, of some approaching event.

And from the distance, from the depths of the crowd, suddenly, in an advancing whirl of people, a voice cried:

"Stop him!"

Ten voices, a hundred voices, immediately took up the cry; from mouth to mouth it was hurled, now ironical, now sinister:

"Stop him! stop him!"

The little, the big, the women, the cabmen standing on their seats and unable to proceed, all now clamored, gesticulated, threatened. "Catch the thief!" "Jump on the murderer!"

What thief? What murderer? No one could have told precisely, but in the contagion an intoxication grew, a blind madness for reprisal, a disposition to lynch, and I saw the innocently ferocious and cowardly instinct of crowds display itself, the greedy attitude of dogs before the hunt.

At last some one near me spread the real truth.

A man had just escaped from the prison-wagon that was taking him to jail.

Just what crime he had committed nobody knew, but he was very young and had not a wicked look. In a blockade of vehicles at a street-corner, he had leaped upon the shoulders of his stooping guardian, forced the door, jumped out, and fled.

No sooner was the signal given than from the smallest corner, from the dark bosom of the alleys and passage-ways, surged unexpected champions of authority, aid spontaneously lent to the police. Strange and disappointing contrast, melancholy problem of human nature, in this locality where is concentrated the wrath of future insurrections, the last refuge of the oppressed, the disinherited, the wretched tired of being always alone in suffering and paying, straightway repression and force had found assistance.

"Stop him! stop him!"

And, hugging the walls, burying himself in groups, zigzaging, plunging into helpful labyrinths to reappear farther on in the open squares, the desperate fugitive promptly felt the pack biting at his heels.

Now, at the top of the hill, he was surrounded; surely they would nab him, stifle him against a shop-front; twice already, on the point of being taken, he had released himself by a wild effort, but he would not escape again.

And yet he did escape again, after a struggle that left him clad in rags, and in the distance I saw him turn and rush down again, as if bewildered.

Shouting rude replies, his eyes filled now with gleams of rage, now with supplicating appeals for generosity, he opened a way for himself, was submerged for a moment, then became again victorious, by turns crouching and leaping.

It was a sublime defence against heaven, things, and beings,—oh! the beings who a moment before were so good and gentle, but now, without personal reason, over a chance occurrence, had become more implacably cruel than executioners and tigers.

"Stop him! stop him!"

"There he is, there he is!"

"Look there, Monsieur, grab him!"

Yes, he was but a few steps away, within my reach; he was almost upon me. In a last effort, after a sudden change in his course, he plunged forward, with foam on his lips, breathless, exhausted.

"Now's the chance!" screamed the excited crowd.

And the moment was decisive.

I had but to stretch out my arm and let him fall over it.

And my arm did not stir.

Amid the outcries, braving the surprise and fury of this noble people, I did not make a move, and the man passed.

How did it happen? Why did I not stop the man? I can answer only confusedly; I simply felt that I could never do it, and I am still happy in the thought that I did so feel.

Take my share of responsibility in the more or less equitable punishment that awaited this unfortunate? Collaborate in striking below, when the proper place to strike is above? Consider nothing but the mean clamor of the crowd to the neglect of one's own conscience? . . . No, no, that did not concern me; let society take care of itself; I will not be the instrument of its revenge. Go on, poor devil, whoever you may be; go get yourself caught by others, you who have shown so much skill in escaping from that atrocious cage. You have saved yourself, so much the better! You have had for a moment the illusion of the free air, of space regained; it is not I that will take it from you, not I that will put you back behind the bars! . . .

The crowd, still on the track of its prey, had rushed over me, and, in the calm that it left behind it, a very correct old gentleman, with a gold watch-chain, came up to me to express his indignation.

If honest people do not know their duty, if the rights of society are not paramount, what will become of us?

He made use of all the phrases that inflate big bellies; he spoke superbly, with all the solemnity of reason; and it was plain that to him I seemed some very

dangerous Anarchist.

But the indignation of so considerable a personage did me good, and seemed to me like a reward sent to me by supreme Pity.

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The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, Flushing Institute, Flushing, N. Y.

Target, section A.—"The Voice," 30 Lafayette Place, New York city, in an editorial on October 3, replied to a letter from Congressman Harter favoring the retirement of the greenbacks and praising the English currency system as a contrast. The editor quoted an editorial by Horace White describing and praising the English system, and commented in part as follows:

Notice well the statements made by Horace White: "If it [demand for gold for export] is an unusual demand, the bank raises the rate of discount."

"If the export continues, nevertheless, the bank raises the rate of discount another peg, say to 5 per cent. This causes another lot of borrowers to pay up," etc.

"As it [the bank] forces borrowers to pay 5 per cent. who were formerly paying only 3, it compels some of them to sell their goods at lower prices," etc.

There you have the heart of the system, and, as "there is no assignable limit to these three operations"—momentous words!—it may be clearly seen that the whole business world is at the mercy of "the bank"—that is to say, of the bankers—under any such system. They can regulate, not only the rates of interest on money, but the prices of commodities, and *compel* merchants and manufacturers to sell or go to the wall.

"The Voice" favors an exclusive government currency. Point out that, as long as the issue of money is monopolized, whether by the government or by the banks, these dangerous powers remain in the hands of government, of the banks, or of both; that all our experience proves that government cannot be trusted not to manipulate the currency in the interest of monopoly and speculation; that the Bank of England would not have these powers but for the exclusive privileges conferred on it by government; that, if the business of issuing money were free to everybody, such powers could exist *nowhere*.

Section B.—T. B. Quaw Beigrade, Mont., is described as a Democrat, quick-brained, a student of history, strongly impressed with the evils of interest. Show him the way to cut down interest, or its dependence on governmental privilege; recommend literature.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

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